ABORIGINAL VALUES AND SOCIAL SERVICES: THE KAHNAWAKE EXPERIENCE

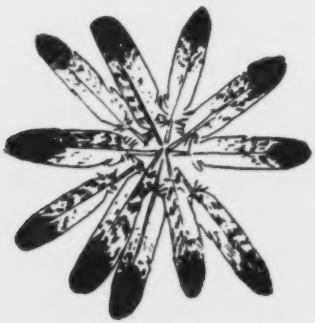
104-04454/

KAHNAWAKE SHAKOTIIA'TAKEHNHAS
COMMUNITY SERVICES

In collaboration with

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL ON
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ABORIGINAL VALUES AND SOCIAL SERVICES: THE KAHNAWAKE EXPERIENCE



SUMMARY REPORT

About the artist

Wari McComber is a Mohawk of Kahnawake. Although Wari has been an accomplished artist for many years, she also spends much of her time working as a prevention specialist in the area of alcohol and drug abuse prevention with the elementary school children of Kahnawake.

About the art

The eagle is a guide and is symbolic of the role of Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services as a helper reaching out to the community. The feathers represent respect and the pride of our people. The work as a whole is symbolic of the spirituality to which the community is returning.

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to this project, especially the people in Kahnawake who responded so generously to our surveys with their thoughts and advice. We will reflect on their words with the greatest seriousness.

Nia:wen

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The project team would like to express their appreciation to the staff of Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services and the Canadian Council on Social Development for their support and encouragement, as well as to Michel Smith, who was our Project Officer at the National Welfare Grants Program, for his unfailing interest in the potential of this study.

*The **National Welfare Grants Division** of Human Resources Development Canada (formerly in Health and Welfare Canada) is pleased to have provided financial support and consultation to this project. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Department.*

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FOREWORD

Since the time of first contact with the Europeans, Native peoples have seen their values, principles, ceremonies and structures diminished. Yet these values, ceremonies and structures were established to keep the individual in a state of well-being; holistic well-being was the concept that Native peoples followed in practice. The need for balance among the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental parts of one's being was of the utmost importance.

Over the past 300 or more years, we have seen attempts to assimilate Native peoples and the dominance of European practices and institutions. Yet we are also beginning to see that many of these practices and institutions are of questionable use and effectiveness for Native peoples.

Kahnawake is at a critical point in re-establishing its responsibilities about how we, as Mohawks, will survive and develop for the future. The European approach is no longer acceptable to our community and thus there is a need for a more focused and harmonized approach to meeting the needs of Kahnawa'kehro':non — the people and community of Kahnawake.

Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS) is committed to hear what our people are saying. We want to involve them in determining how we deliver services and which services we deliver. This is reflected in the KSCS Mission Statement.

> *"Our goal, with the assistance of a team of caring people, is to encourage a healthier lifestyle through promotion, prevention and wellness activities that strengthen pride, respect and responsibilities of self, family and community as Mohawks of Kahnawake."*

This report is not intended to be a final product in itself. Rather it should be used as a tool to further the involvement of our community in taking back the responsibility for solving social problems and dealing with the well-being of our community.

Individually, we are like fragile strands of sweetgrass, but like sweetgrass that is braided together, individuals linked together in a healing circle of families lend support to solving the problems of the community.

Donald Horne
Executive Director
Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services

ABORIGINAL VALUES AND SOCIAL SERVICES: THE KAHNAWAKE EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

"We are all family." (Mohawk elder)

This project was undertaken to assist Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS) in providing a community based social services program which reflects community values.

The project involved Kahnawake residents in exploring the values and principles which they see as important, as a basis for developing services to meet priority social needs in the community. We received many assessments and recommendations which, taken together, create a vision of a culturally responsive social services program. Many of these ideas should be tested further as part of the KSCS development process.

We also wanted people to consider the *role* of social services in the community, and we now have considerable advice as to the strong preventive and supportive role social services can play in advancing family and community well-being.

KSCS intends, through this report and by other means, to share the knowledge gained from this study with the people of Kahnawake, with other Aboriginal communities and organizations, and with non-Native stakeholders, in order to increase awareness of the role of cultural values in the design of social policies, programs and practices to meet community needs.

BACKGROUND

Aboriginal communities are striving to recover from the damage of the past, due in part to the impact of Canadian child welfare practices and residential schools on family life, as well as to the loss of land, languages, and culture.

As part of this renewal, communities are taking control of the development and delivery of their social services. "The number of bands delivering some or all of the services included under child welfare to their own members increased by over 400% between 1981 and 1986, from 40 to 203 bands" (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Indian Child and Family Services in Canada*, 1987). There is evidence that outcomes improve when programs come under the community's direction and emphasize prevention and family support.

Increasingly, communities expect their social services to reflect and reinforce Indian cultural values as a means of strengthening the community. In fact, many see the role of social services not just as a resource for meeting human needs, but also as a means for restoring community health in general — a key element of Aboriginal recovery and self-determination.

In Kahnawake, Social Services is one of the programs of the Kahnawake Shakotiia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS). KSCS has been developing an integrated approach towards its programs so that they will be responsive to the community and focus on prevention. It was therefore timely to consult people in the community about community values and how the Social Services Program could incorporate them more.

PROCEDURE

To gain a representative and balanced view of community opinion, we consulted people in several ways. First, through a household survey, we interviewed 74 adults in homes selected at random. We also consulted 17 "key informants" — people chosen for their particular knowledge of community life by virtue of their occupations. To give proper attention to the next generation, we then sought the views of two groups of young people. We met with ten members of the M.A.D. (Making Adult Decisions) group and invited them to provide their views using the "Key Informants Questionnaire." We also held a two-hour discussion with ten students from the Kahnawake Survival School focused on the topic of responsibility and family life.

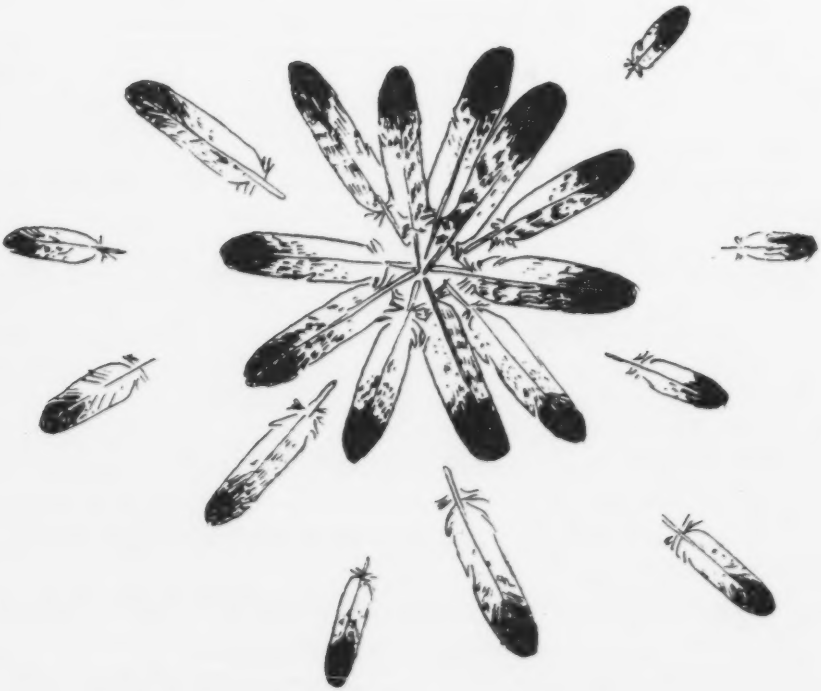
The groups we consulted were not all asked the same questions. In the household survey, our 74 respondents were asked questions contained in a comprehensive "Household Survey Questionnaire." Their comments were recorded on the questionnaire form by our interviewers, for later analysis by the researchers. The Key Informants were asked to complete a different questionnaire, focusing more on the social services. The M.A.D. group were asked to complete as much of the Key Informants Questionnaire as they could on the basis of their knowledge of the social services program. The Survival School students did not complete a questionnaire; instead, they participated in a group discussion initiated by a story presented to them at the outset of the meeting. The main points of the discussion were then noted by the researchers. No individual names were recorded and all identities were kept confidential.

We sought guidance on several topics directly related to the aims of this project:

- What problems and needs do the community see as priorities?
- How familiar are people with KSCS programs?
- What are the important community values, and how may social services adequately reflect these values?
- Is there a connection between community accountability and better social services?
- What would people recommend to make social services better serve the community needs?

- What is meant by "family responsibility"?

Everyone we approached agreed to participate, they openly shared their views and gave serious thought to our questions. Following are the highlights of what we heard.



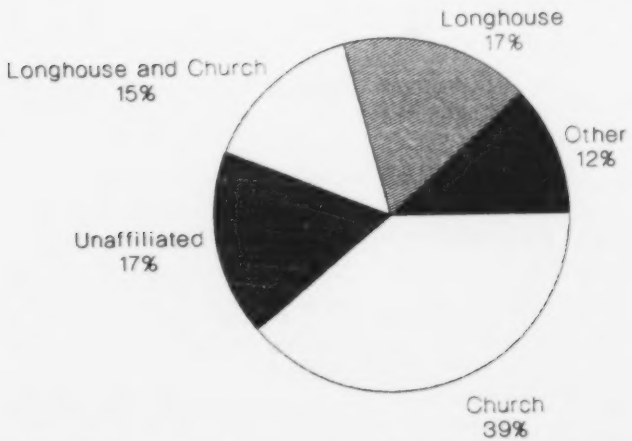
PROFILES OF GROUPS CONSULTED

1. **Household Survey Group**. Our survey group of 74 adults tended to be older than the general Kahnawake adult population. We heard from twice as many women as men, possibly because women tended to be at home when the interviewers called. Over 60% of our household respondents were married or living with a partner, 23% were single, and just over 16% were widowed or divorced.

Over half of these respondents were parents with children living at home. Of these, 30% were lone parents.

Over a third of the respondents described their background as either Longhouse tradition or both Church and Longhouse. Almost 40 per cent reported Church membership only, and 17 per cent said they belonged to no particular religious or traditional organization. Twelve per cent of the household group specified "other" backgrounds such as personal and traditional beliefs.

Religious Affiliation of Household Respondents



2. **Key Informants.** The seventeen "key informants" were adult residents of Kahnawake, men and women of different ages in a variety of occupations in government, health, education, business, peacekeeping, environment, construction and other community work.

3. **Youth.** The ten members of the M.A.D. group were boys and girls from 16 to 19 years of age. The ten Survival School students were boys and girls in their final year of high school.

MAIN FINDINGS

We heard many voices, and several major themes emerged. We must emphasize that most people offered their views within a broad, "holistic" context. As was frequently pointed out, traditional values — Mohawk values — do not stand in isolation from each other, but are aspects of a moral universe which people are trying to recall and restore.

> *"We must work on getting people to believe once again that* ***all*** *of their actions and words carry a consequence, and that they must be responsible to the entire community — and that's the way of Kanienkeha:ka."*

> *"Our culture is the basis of how we have lived, how we live and how we should live in the future. Its values guide us to our personal spirituality. In the tradition of the circle, everyone knew their roles and responsibilities towards one another. Bringing institutions — church, school, social services, peacekeepers — into the community has replaced the responsibility we had for each other. I know this is easy to say, but we can work out some compromises."*

Without losing sight of this "holistic" perspective, it is helpful to draw out some of the specific themes as they apply to the role of social services.

a. **Consensus on Problems and Needs.** While a variety of problems were mentioned, the majority of our respondents felt that drug and alcohol abuse was the most obvious and serious one, although it was often connected to other problems. Indeed, many people ascribed alcohol-related behaviour to such underlying issues as the loss of traditional roles, identity and cultural values. They saw, therefore, not only a need for drug treatment and prevention services, but also for awareness education and group activities to strengthen self-esteem and identity.

Family violence and family breakdown was also of great concern to the people with whom we spoke. For many, the need to restore family values and to heal family life is paramount, and they see respect and responsibility for one another as basic for such a healing process. A

number of people said that families needed help and support to engage in this process.

While there was much consensus among the groups we consulted about the seriousness of alcohol-related issues, there were some key differences in the way men and women, and youth and adults viewed other problems and needs. Proportionately, more women than men in the household survey emphasised family functioning issues, while more men than women expressed concern about unemployment and lack of unity in the community. Youth emphasized problems of school drop-outs and teenage pregnancies more than did the adults.

b. **Importance of Cultural Values.** Whether or not people actually live their values, they certainly think about them, discuss them and believe them to be essential as a basis for a healthy life. Over half the household respondents discussed values "frequently." Most were articulate in describing values and how to translate them into practical terms. Almost everyone interviewed agreed that social services for Aboriginal people should recognize and take more account of their cultural values and traditions. For quite a few people, "cultural appropriateness" means "practising common sense." Clearly, cultural values and program responsiveness is a topic most people are quite eager to discuss.

c. **The "Traditional" Family.** Household respondents frequently mentioned that social services should reflect "traditional" family values. What does this mean? The comments we received suggest that this means families being responsible for themselves, and the Social Services Program not taking that responsibility away. *"... there needs to be education so that people become more responsible for themselves and their families, instead of service agencies taking over ... Social Services could spend more time on support."*

"There are too many non-Native intervention programs. The responsibility of child rearing, discipline and even care of the elderly has been taken away from families."

For other respondents, there was less emphasis on traditional roles and practices as such, but still a strong belief in the importance of family values of respect, responsibility and caring, of children's needs, and of the support of the extended family.

d. **Support for Role of KSCS Social Services.** A significant number of the people consulted thought that KSCS had an important role to play in resolving community problems and almost everyone in the household survey recognized Social Services as a program of KSCS. While, on average, over half were *familiar* with specific services, the reported *use* of services was not as high as might be expected. Of those who had used Social Services, about 67% were *satisfied. Confidence* in Social Services was also quite high: 65% of the household group said they felt "confident" or "fairly confident" they would get the help they needed from Social Services.

e. **Community Accountability.** Community involvement and accountability were identified by the key informants as important elements for community support of social services. The majority of them judged the present level of accountability as "insufficient." A variety of recommendations were made as to how Social Services could become more accountable.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Due to the small size of our household sample relative to the population of Kahnawake, and the fact that twice as many women as men were in this sample, caution must be used when drawing conclusions from our household survey results. Nevertheless, we feel confident — since this was a random sample of households and the responses to many questions reflected the view of the majority of the respondents, often reinforced by the views of the key informants and youth groups — that a survey of all Kahnawake residents would yield a similar picture to that obtained in this project.

In general, our findings confirmed our expectation that for Kahnawake (and probably for other First Nations communities), community and traditional values strongly influence people's attitudes towards social services and their preferences about how needs should be met. And although their priorities may differ according to age and sex, residents can readily identify the positive aspects in the community, as well as its problems and needs. We can also conclude that, if consulted, members of the community will be quite specific and practical in their recommendations for change.

For Kahnawake residents, the family is of primary importance, which indicates support for a family-centred philosophy in the community's social services. As well, there is strong interest in prevention and a belief that everyone needs to take responsibility, which also supports the idea of social services having a collaborative, supportive and preventive role in the community.

The findings of this project strongly suggest that people's support for the role of social services is stronger when the services reflect their cultural values and there is meaningful community involvement in the program planning and delivery. It was frequently stated that the social services program should be accountable to the community, giving further support for a community-based type of program.

Finally, while we tried to ensure that the design of this project was "culturally relevant" for Kahnawake, we were cautioned by several respondents not to lose sight of the holistic nature of reality — that causes, effects, problems and solutions are part of a whole. We were told that if we had to separate our study into component parts for the surveys and analysis, it should be "put back together again" when the time came for understanding and action. [This advice reflects one of several key differences between Aboriginal and Euro-North American thought which have a bearing on the design of research by, or on behalf of, First Nations communities. See the concluding section on Implications, for other differences.]

DETAILED RESULTS

The results that follow are presented by topic. Where applicable, findings from the Household Survey, the Key Informants Survey and the M.A.D. youth group are given. (As noted in the methodology section, the same questions were not all asked of all three groups.) A summary of the focus group discussion with the Survival School students is given separately.

Community Well-Being

We asked our household respondents if they could identify things that were really going well in Kahnawake, things that were important for the community's well-being. Frequently mentioned activities were (shown as a per cent of all responses to this question):

- Alcohol & drug abuse services (26%)
- Mohawk language teaching (23%)
- Youth Centre, MAD Group (15%)
- Hospital services (11%)
- Community groups (10%)
- Golden Age Club (7%)
- Economic development (7%)

Social Problems in Kahnawake

When respondents were asked what, in their opinion, were the most serious social problems or challenges facing Kahnawake today, alcohol or drug abuse was mentioned most frequently. *"Alcohol and drug abuse in this community is the primary problem,"* said one key informant. *"All of the other problems are direct or indirect results of alcohol and drug abuse."*

Interestingly, few of the adults mentioned dropping out of school as a serious problem, yet it was of concern to the youth interviewed.

Some people emphasized that the problems were connected. Certain losses, for example loss of pride and identity, of traditional family practices, or loss of moral precepts such as respect and responsibility, were said to give rise to such problems as drug and alcohol abuse or family violence.

Table 1

Most Serious Social Problems Mentioned by Household Survey Respondents, Key Informants and Members of the M.A.D. Group (Per cent of respondents)

Problem	Household (N=72)	Key (N=17)	MAD (N=10)
Drug and alcohol abuse	85	53	90
Community tensions/ disunity	*	42	20
Family violence	21	29	30
Teen problems/pregnancy	14	12	60
Child abuse/neglect	11	35	20
School drop out	3	6	30
Other problems	*	29	40

* *No comparison is possible due to differences in the questionnaires.*

Recommendations for Dealing with Community Problems and Needs

Key Informants were asked which specific social services would best help to deal with the problems and needs they had identified. (Although there were only 17 Key Informants surveyed, some social services were mentioned more than once when the informant considered a service helpful for several different problems or needs.) The most frequently mentioned services were:

Social Services	**Times Mentioned by Key Informants**
Parenting Skills workshops	27
Crisis Intervention	14
Family Mediation	12
Advocacy	8
Young Offenders	8
Youth Protection	8
Emergency On-Call	7
Foster Care	4
Home Care services	4
Adoption	3
Third Party Administration	3
Manitou Independent Living Centre	2
Other services:	
Public education	9
Psychological services	1
Al Anon groups	1

In the Household Survey, we asked people more generally what they thought was needed to deal with Kahnawake's problems. Although some specific suggestions were offered to help resolve such problems as alcohol and drug abuse, most of the recommendations from householders tended to address underlying causes. Teaching **family life and parenting skills** was advocated most often. **Community development** solutions were also put forward frequently. Although it

Table 2

Recommendations for Dealing with Community Problems (Per cent of Household Respondents*)

Recommendations	Total (N=72)	Men (N=24)	Women (N=48)
Family life and parenting skills[a]	40	46	37
Community development[b]	37	42	33
Teach children respect[c]	30	8	40
Instill values/ Mohawk language[d]	26	29	25
Youth programs/education[e]	17	8	21
Drug and alcohol solutions[f]	15	12	21
Unity	11	21	6
Law and order	11	21	6
Employment/ economic development	8	12	4
Strengthen leadership	4	0	6
Self-government/land	3	8	0
Other	6	8	4

* *Percentages add up to more than 100 due to respondents giving multiple answers*

[a] *Encourage parents to pay more attention to children; hold parenting skills workshops, awareness training, family support groups, and family life education.*

[b] *Face issues realistically; discuss issues/improve communications; sports; community planning policies; volunteering.*

[c] *Teach children respect; provide more discipline*

[d] *More cultural events and activities; show outsiders our beliefs, encourage community workers to live Mohawk values, and teach values to youth.*

[e] *Youth activities, awareness education in schools, a place for children to go, community jobs for youth.*

[f] *Needs assessment, education, dry activities, alcohol and drug treatment centre, regulation of drugs and alcohol, raise age limits for drinking.*

was important to both sexes, the women surveyed placed more emphasis on **teaching children respect** and on **youth education**. Men, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on **employment, unity,** and **law and order** solutions than did the women. According to the householders, the main obstacles to dealing with problems included apathy, a lack of unity, a lack of community leadership, fear of speaking out, and a lack of respect or values.

Responsibility for Meeting Community Needs

When the Householders and the Key Informants were asked, "Who do you think should be responsible for meeting community needs?", they often gave more than one answer. Many people said that "the community as a whole has to work together." Some people also felt that the leaders and the Mohawk Council were responsible for taking action. A considerable proportion of the household respondents and many key informants saw a role for the Social Services program in meeting the community's needs.

Table 3

Responsibility for Meeting Community Needs
(Per cent of respondents*)

Responsibility	Household Respondents	Key Informants
Community, all people	33	65
Leaders, Council	30	94
Social Services	24	76
Family, parents, elders	19	12
Organizations, churches	17	47
Education system	7	47
Peacekeepers	4	23

* *Percentages add up to more than 100 due to respondents giving multiple answers.*

Familiarity with, Use of, and Satisfaction with the Social Services Program

Household survey respondents were shown a list of programs available in Kahnawake and were asked to identify those programs delivered by KSCS.

As shown in Table 4, almost everyone (97%) correctly identified **Social Services** as a KSCS program. Ninety-three per cent of respondents recognized **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention** as a KSCS program, yet over 70% of the people thought, incorrectly, that **Onen**

Table 4

Recognition of KSCS Programs
(Per cent of Household Respondents)

Programs	Thought to be delivered by KSCS			Correct
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Social Services*	97	1	1	97
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention*	93	1	5	93
Kahnawake Outreach*	82	3	15	82
Healing the Family Circle*	69	7	24	69
Community Health Representatives*	61	16	23	61
Resource Centre*	59	13	27	59
Native Court Worker	39	34	27	34
Home Nurses	47	28	24	28
Onen To:kon Treatment Services	70	15	15	15
Overall % Correct				60

* *KSCS Program*

To:kon Treatment Services was also administered by KSCS. In all, responses were correct more than six times out of every ten.

The household respondents were then asked which specific services within the Social Services Program they were familiar with; whether they had used a service over the past five years and, where appropriate, whether they were satisfied with the service (Table 5).

On average, familiarity with specific services was 51%. People were most familiar with Home Care services and least familiar with Advocacy and, surprisingly, Parenting Skills programs.

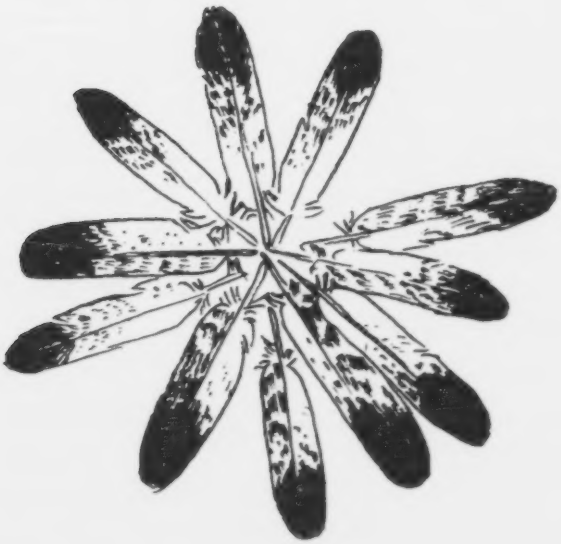
Overall, the use of Social Services by our respondents (11.8%) was low compared to the size of the social services caseload. It is possible that some people did not want to tell the interviewer about their contact with Social Services.

Table 5

Familiarity with, Use of, and Satisfaction with Social Services (Per cent of Household respondents who said "Yes")

Service	Familiar	Used	Satisfied
Home Care services	84	24	90
Foster Care	69	17	44
Emergency On-Call	66	19	93
Family Counselling	64	18	60
Manitou Centre	63	1	25
Crisis Intervention	59	6	62
Youth Protection	59	16	42
Family Mediation	44	14	54
Young Offenders	40	14	62
Third Party Administration	40	8	71
Adoption	32	3	50
Parenting Skills	31	6	86
Advocacy	16	3	67
Overall level	51	12	67

The overall level of satisfaction with **Social Services** was 67%. **Home Care services** were given a high satisfaction rating (90% of respondents), as were the **Emergency On-Call** service (93%) and the **Parenting Skills workshops** (86%). On the other hand, there was less satisfaction with **Foster Care** (44% of respondents) and **Crisis Intervention** (62%).



Confidence in Social Services

Eighteen per cent of the householders surveyed said they felt "very confident" they would get the help needed from Social Services; 47% were "fairly confident," 20% "do not know" and 15% said they were "definitely not confident" they would get the help they needed.

Among the reasons given for a lack of confidence in Social Services were: a negative past experience with Social Services (six people); a belief that they could solve their own problems (3 respondents), a perceived lack of follow-up by Social Services, a belief that the services were not "culturally responsive," and fear about a lack of confidentiality (one person each).

Changes to Social Services

We asked the household respondents how they might like to change the present Social Services Program, given the opportunity to do so. Not everybody would make changes. Following are the changes most frequently mentioned by the 40 householders who responded to this question:

- Strengthen the promotion of family counselling (25%)
- More staff and/or smaller caseloads (25%)
- Strengthen child and youth services (20%)
- Reflect the traditional family system more strongly (18%)
- More priority on prevention (17%)
- More Native staff (15%)
- Monitor the needs of the elderly (12%)
- Hold more parenting and motherhood groups (10%)
- No change/service is good (55%)

(Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple answers.)

We also asked the key informants how they would make Social Services more relevant to Kahnawake's culture, values and traditions. Several recommended more contact with the community, including consultation with the Longhouse, more involvement with traditional people, and more use of festivals and rituals. One person suggested staff training in The Great Law and Mohawk culture.

"More Native workers" was mentioned five times, as was increased use of the Mohawk language in the reception, correspondence and telephone answering of KSCS. It was also suggested that traditional days be recognized in the calendar, traditional festivals be highlighted in the Newsletter, and employees be permitted to attend festivals.

Several key informants suggested community needs assessments and research into the root causes of problems and the development of culturally relevant solutions. More prevention and public education activities were also mentioned, and there was a suggestion to use art, play, music and traditional classes for therapy.

One person suggested that KSCS become the extended family and use a circle rather than a pyramid as its organizational structure to reflect the value of everyone being important.

Values and Traditions

Almost everyone (94% of householders and 82% of key informants) agreed that social services for Native people should take more account of Aboriginal values. A range of values and practices were advocated by both groups for implementation in social services.

Here are some examples of what people in the household survey said about reflecting community values in the social services:

"Communication with and respect towards the elderly; make them feel useful and wanted."

"Keep children in the family whenever possible."

"Mediation process for families is, in a sense, a traditional way of doing things; it is not ordering people in what to do."

"Punishment is not always the answer. As a form of community works, (Young Offenders) should be expected to assist elders in the community and share experiences with them and thus tie in the two generations."

In counselling, "acknowledge the spiritual approach (which is natural and less formal) along with the scientific."

"Mohawk speakers to provide services to the elderly."

There should be "a cultural component in all areas of Social Services to remind people of personal responsibility."

Table 6

Recommended Ways Social Services could Reflect Mohawk Values (Per cent of Household Respondents)

Teaching respect/responsibility to youth	50
Recognition of extended family practices	38
Reflecting traditional values	35
Involving families more with elders	31
Incorporating traditional family practices	24
Keeping children in culture/community	19
Implementation of Mohawk language	16
Teaching responsibility in family life	18
Involving elders in family mediation	11
Creation of an elders' forum	8
Ensuring availability of services for elders	8
Supporting elders' independent living	7
Putting the family first	7
Ensuring family involvement	7
Supporting justice alternatives	7
Youth/parent school discussion groups	4
Supporting an elders lodge	4
Supporting a youth group home	3
Traditional group to oversee decisions	3
Safe homes instead of sending people away	3
Caring and nurturing	3
Supporting better discipline in school	1
Discussion of children's problems	1

Our key informants also suggested ways for making Social Services more relevant to Mohawk culture:

"Call yourself (Social Services) 'The Extended Family' — Kawatsire."

"(Social Services) should have a couple of Golden Rules: To never destroy, inadvertently or not, someone's self-esteem; to educate our people without preaching."

"I think this (the question of incorporating values) is very important. I think that KSS needs to do more prevention, education and group work to get the community to take responsibility for itself."

"... all employees should receive Mohawk behaviour training."

"... need to do some PR and community value workshops to rebuild trust and provide social, moral guidance."

Specific Aboriginal Values

In the household survey, we asked people to consider a set of statements about values (shown below), to say whether they agreed with the value statements, and then rate their importance for social services.

Household Survey: Statements About Values

Extended family: *The extended family is important to Native communities for its role in supporting, nurturing and caring for its members.*

Responsibility: *We are put here by the Creator to care for each other and for Mother Earth. We should therefore be responsible for ourselves, for our families, for the next generation and for our community.*

Respect: *People should be respected for themselves, for their inner strength or wisdom, rather than for being "high achievers."*

Child rearing: *The child is sacred. Parents do not own the child. They are granted the responsibility from the Creator for raising the child, with the help of the extended family and the community.*

Rights: *In today's world, individual rights are more important than the rights of the group. If I am not hurting anyone else, the community should not interfere with what I do.*

Decision making: *When making major decisions, communities should draw on the wisdom of the past and look ahead to the effects for seven generations.*

Individual and the group: *The collective well-being takes priority over individual wishes.*

Family unity: *Family members should come together when needed, even if they don't necessarily agree.*

Preparation of youth: *In today's world, a good education and job opportunities are essential for the future of our children.*

Sharing: *In a community, people are generous and willing to share.*

Co-operation: *Some goals are best achieved by co-operation and consensus.*

Ninety-six per cent of the household survey respondents considered **responsibility** to be "very important" in social services. Next in importance, at about 88%, were statements about the **extended family** and **preparation and education of youth**. The responses to this question were as follows:

Table 7

Importance of Traditional Values for Social Services (Per cent of Household Respondents)

Value	Strongly Agree	Importance for Social Services		
		Very	Fairly	Less/Not
Responsibility	97	96	4	–
Extended family	89	88	11	1
Respect	88	82	16	1
Youth education	88	88	11	1
Child is sacred	78	85	15	–
Family unity	78	83	14	3
Wisdom of past	71	79	18	3
Sharing & cooperation	71	81	18	1
Collective priority	56	57	34	9
Individual priority	14	33	27	40

Community Accountability

Studies elsewhere have suggested that social service programs which are accountable to the communities they serve tend to be more effective and receive better support from the people. We wanted to hear what our key informants thought about this.

We first asked about the present level of community control over the planning, administration and delivery of social services in Kahnawake. Eleven key informants thought that the degree of community control over social services was "insufficient," one person thought it "sufficient," and one did not have enough information to decide.

More consultation with the community about needs and priorities was chosen by 13 of the 17 key informants as the best mechanism to ensure community accountability of social services. Two people thought the best approach would be to have more community representation on the KSCS Board. A greater use of volunteers was recommended by 12 people.

We also asked the key informants how they thought the outcomes or results of the Social Services Program might change if there were greater community involvement. Most thought that there would be more positive outcomes — such as less spousal assault, child neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, community tensions, isolation of the elderly, psychological problems and fewer school dropouts — if the community were more involved in the planning and delivery of the Social Services Program.

SURVIVAL SCHOOL STUDENTS' DISCUSSION

A two-hour discussion with ten students from the Kahnawake Survival School was held in order to explore the views of youth on the issue of responsibility and what it means in family life.

We gave a brief introduction to start off the discussion, then shared with the youth what other people had told us in the surveys: that is, that *respect and responsibility are among our basic values and are part of who we are as Mohawk people; that some of our community problems such as alcohol and drug abuse or family troubles come about partly because we don't live these values; that respect means sharing and caring for one another; and that we should have respect for ourselves, our minds and our bodies, and for our families, friends and the community.*

We then presented a short story about a 16-year-old boy named Arthur, his family, and his cousin Darlene, and how they were caught up in a conflict which affected them all. The story described what can happen if respect and responsibility are no longer present.

The discussion which followed pointed out that Arthur, through his drinking and violent behaviour, showed no respect for his family. At the same time, there was a lack of communication and trust among the family members. In looking for someone who might start to take responsibility and begin a healing process, several students identified the Grandmother as a potential strength. Even if the Grandmother herself had an alcohol problem in the past, she could still advise Arthur based on her own experience.

However, if the Grandmother was not someone to whom Arthur could go for help, perhaps his cousin Darlene, as a friend and contemporary, could talk to him. Gradually, the students came to the conclusion that elders in the community had a role to play. Arthur might listen to them with respect, when he could not talk to members of his own family or his friends.

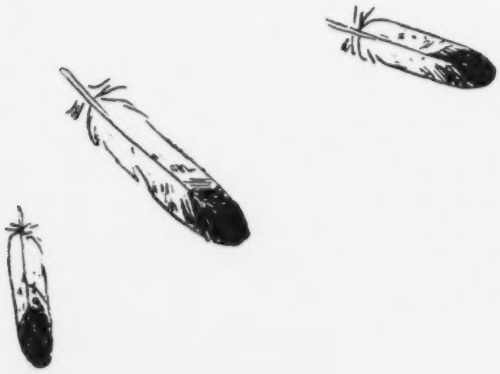
Ultimately it was agreed that if you had a problem such as drinking, you basically had to help yourself because you were responsible, although everyone can always use some help.

One of the questions we asked the students was, "How could KSCS help in supporting everyone to take up their responsibilities?" A spirited discussion about confidentiality and the role of Social Services

followed. Someone asked, "If you know someone who is being abused, should you tell Social Services?" It was explained what Social Services would do in such a case, how important it is for people not to be abused, and how your own confidentiality can be protected if you feel responsible to do something about known abuse.

The students felt that quite a few young people needed help and someone to talk to. They agreed that there was a need for teens in Kahnawake to have somewhere to go, such as a drop-in centre or a place to hold dances.

In summary, the major points which emerged from the two-hour discussion with students of the Survival School were: that responsibility starts with oneself; that respect by youth towards elders is important, but also by older people and parents towards young people; and that communication and trust are essential if difficult problems are to be resolved. They expressed a strong interest in the role of Social Services and the discussion was a good learning opportunity.



DESIGN IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAMS

It was not the intent of this research project to make specific program recommendations to KSCS. These should be made by KSCS Board, management and staff considering our findings in the context of the ongoing program development process now under way. However, we do want to indicate the main policy and program implications of this study, and to provide a compilation of the recommendations from our study participants.

Implications for Kahnawake and its Social Services Program

Our findings raise the question of what Social Services can do to be more culturally responsive and enable families and individuals to take responsibility for the well-being of themselves, their children and other family members. How do people see a strong family orientation being reflected in their Social Services Program? How can a more preventative approach be taken? How can the Program become more sensitive to the needs of the community?

Strengthening **family counselling** was advocated many times. Holding **parenting and motherhood groups**, strengthening **prevention programs**, and closer **monitoring of the needs of the elderly** were also recommended frequently. These recommendations fit well within the context of "reflecting family values."

When the question is one of "traditional" family values, the balance may be more delicate. Since individual interpretations of "traditional family practices" likely differ from family to family, Social Services may want to continue to make clear what basic principles it is guided by and what "mandated" or statutory responsibilities it carries on behalf of the whole community for the needs, protection and well-being of children and families.

For the Social Services Program to be culturally responsive, reflect family values ("traditional" or otherwise), practice prevention and be accountable to the community, while still being a responsible protector and service provider, is not an easy task.

KSCS could try for such a balance by following a comprehensive, values-guided orientation to set behaviourial standards or goals that are "negotiated with" and shared by individuals, families and the community at large.

Implications for Other Aboriginal Communities and Kahnawake

Every community is different. Whether other Indian communities, even within the same nation, have similar attitudes, we do not know for sure. It is likely that some of the same principles for conducting research in these communities would apply. Moreover, other research studies in this area suggest that many of the concerns, values, attitudes and recommendations made by the Kahnawake residents would also be voiced by people in other Indian communities.

Based on our project, we believe that the following observations can have implications for other Aboriginal communities:

- When consulted, residents of Aboriginal communities can readily articulate community values and make practical recommendations for program development that are suitable to their unique situations.
- Social service programs can build on the positive aspects of a community — those elements and activities which residents themselves identify as going well and contributing to the community's well-being.
- Although prevention must be encouraged, intervention for treatment and protection cannot be significantly reduced in the short term because of the urgency of current problems in most communities. However, a more "collaborative" approach, with the community assuming more responsibility for resolving problems and involving community members as volunteers and advisors, might gain strong support, particularly where social services has a clear family focus.
- Funding bodies (such as federal government programs) may consider it cost-effective to support the development of prevention and community education programs, including providing funding for the necessary research, staff training and service innovations, particularly if there is good community support.
- Before communities introduce major innovations or negotiate funding with federal, provincial or other levels of government, it would be appropriate to consult with "ordinary people" in the community (as distinct from "experts") about the values they

consider to be important and which they would like to see incorporated in their social service programs.

When the jurisdiction, authority and funding of social services being transferred to Native-run agencies is contingent upon the establishment of "standards," and where any or all such standards are shown to be derived from a community's own expressed values, then such standards ought to be recognized as equally valid as the so-called "mainstream" standards used by non-Aboriginal social services.

Research on behalf of Aboriginal communities should respect First Nations' outlook and values by recognizing the inter-relatedness of individuals, families and the community; it must acknowledge how issues, problems and causes are connected, and understand the necessity for solutions to be comprehensive and holistic.

We hope that this study has contributed to the growing body of evidence that members of Aboriginal communities are familiar with the values of their culture and they can envision how these values can be expressed in their social services. For if a community does not see itself reflected in its own institutions, then the support necessary for those institutions to be able to play a healing role will be lacking.

We will leave the last word to a resident of Kahnawake.

"In general, it is everyone's responsibility to foster a healthy society, but we must first agree in a philosophical sense what are the essential ingredients of that healthy society."

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED FROM RESPONDENTS

[Items mentioned four or more times are noted in italic type.]

Some of these suggestions are general in intent; some are directed at the Social Services Program, and some imply a supportive or advocacy role for Social Services. For convenience, suggestions have been grouped into general categories, by topic.

Drug and alcohol abuse prevention:

- *Support prevention and awareness*
- *Regulate use of drugs and alcohol* (prohibition, shorter licensing hours, raise allowable age for drinking)
- *Al Anon groups*
- Drug and alcohol treatment centre
- Conduct drug and alcohol needs assessment

Strengthening family life:

- *Promote family counselling*
- *Teach family life education and parenting skills*
- *Hold parenting skills/child care workshops*
- *Parent support groups*
- *Awareness education on children's needs*
- *Teach children respect*
- *Pay more attention to children*
- *Greater use of family mediation*
- *Recognition of extended family practices in policies*
- *Incorporate traditional family practices*
- *Teach responsibility in family life*
- *Involve elders in family mediation*
- *Put the family first*
- *Support better discipline in homes and schools*
- *Crisis intervention*

- Family life education for youth and young adults
- Teen pregnancy awareness and support to single parents

Community development:

- *Face and discuss issues realistically/ Improve communications*
- *Support sports and cultural events*
- *More family-oriented and traditional activities*
- *Encourage volunteering*
- *Strengthen community identity*
- *Promote community peace/unity*
- *Address low incomes and unemployment*
- Advocate for community planning policies
- Promote better collaboration among institutions

Youth outreach:

- *Promote youth activities*
- *Promote drug and alcohol abuse awareness in schools*
- *Support a "place" for teens to go*
- *Support community jobs for youth; promote youth employment*
- *Strengthen youth services*
- *Support community alternatives to sentencing young offenders*
- Youth/parent school discussion groups
- Create an after school group

Protection of women, children and youth:

- *Keep children in the family or extended family, wherever possible*
- *Keep children in the culture/the community*
- *Develop "safe homes" instead of sending people away*
- Establish a women's shelter
- Youth group home

Services for elders:

- *Monitor the needs of the elderly*
- *Involve families more with elders*
- *Ensure availability of services for elders at home*
- *Support elders independent living at home*
- *Elders lodge*
- *Expand home care*
- More communication with/respect towards the elderly so they feel useful and wanted
- Mohawk speakers to provide services

Program delivery:

- *More staff/smaller caseloads*
- *Priority for prevention*
- *More public information/promotion of use of services*
- *Involve families in planning*
- *Appropriate use of advocacy*
- *Psychological services*
- Provide different therapeutic experiences using art, play, music and traditional classes
- Develop "foster extended families" for those without extended family support
- Be more caring and nurturing
- More office space
- Greater impartiality by workers
- More respect for clients
- Greater accessibility to workers

Community accountability:

- *Create an elders' forum or advisory council*
- *Traditional group to oversee decisions*
- *Do more public relations and community values workshops*
- *More community consultation on needs and priorities*

- *More community representation of KSCS Board*
- *More contact/consultation with the Longhouse*
- A separate community board
- Put people on KSCS Board who have successfully overcome own problems
- More involvement with traditional people

Cultural responsiveness

(Where not already mentioned):

- *More Native staff (number and proportion)*
- *Reflect traditional values*
- *Increased use of Mohawk language in services, telephone answering, reception and correspondence*
- Change name, or call yourselves "The Extended Family" — Kawatsire
- Use a circle, rather than a pyramid as organizational structure, to reflect the value of everyone being important
- Adopt "Golden Rules": Never destroy self-esteem and educate without preaching.
- All employees to receive Mohawk behaviour training
- Staff training in Great Law and Mohawk culture
- Highlight traditional days in the calendar and festivals in the newsletter and permit staff to attend
- Acknowledge spiritual approach as part of counselling (less formal)

General:

- *Much more prevention and public education*
- Promote unity, trust, communication, law and order, respect, responsibility, good leadership and economic development
- Research into root causes of problems

NOTES

Published by the Canadian Council on Social Development
March 1994

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